Every day began the same. Five minutes before or five minutes after his phone's alarm, Mason Martinez launched into worry. Today's theme was paying rent.

Martinez opened the Gigs app and scrolled, skimming posts with enough intent to feel like he was doing something without actually having to put forth an effort. More and more the app was filled with bullshit tasks that people barely paid for, nothing that you could make a living off of: *Assemble my furniture $20— hemorrhoids focus group— Sweep kitchen floor $5—hemorrhoids focus group— Repaint my fence $50—hemorrhoids focus group.*

Martinez told himself he was going to take gigs until he got $500 today. He went on for nearly 15 minutes, occasionally opening a post, reading the instructions and immediately finding a reason not to take it. Quickly, he became aware that he was wasting time. Now, his subconscious quickly processed the binary options implied by this fact. 0 is the choice to simply pick a gig and get to work achieving his goals; no longer wasting time by taking action. 1 is the choice to understand that the façade of late-stage capitalism that is embodied in the greater Los Angeles area can only continue for fewer and fewer people, as those like him are forced to work ever more menial tasks to get by, and in understanding that fact excuse himself from guilt and therefore participation.

He exited the Gigs App and began scrolling through 30-second bloopers from early 00s sitcoms, still everybody's favorite, and vaping in quick short bursts hoping the desired effects would take quicker. This went on for another 15 minutes.

For Martinez, this was always the ritual before facing the day, his cup of coffee. It takes a lot of momentum to get up, which takes time to build.

He looked up from his phone and looked down at his sparse studio apartment. He hopped down from the top bunk, shimmied between the desk chair and the wall, around the table so cluttered it was rendered useless and past the fridge into the restroom.

On the toilet, he began scrolling the Gigs App one more time, determined to make a selection before he wiped. The physical stress caused by his legs falling asleep was enough to overcome the emotional stress of making a decision. He vaped and blindly scrolled, stopping with his thumb and double tapping before opening his eyes.

Wash my cars $45: Looking for someone (M22-32) to come to my house and hand wash my three cars. MUST HAND WASH. MUST WEAR SWIM TRUNKS. SUPPLIES PROVIDED.

He clicked accept before thinking too hard and quickly ignored the potential implications. After finishing getting ready in the restroom, Martinez headed to the fridge for cereal.

Spoonless, he drank his cereal directly from the bowl and entertained himself by playing games on his phone, which is what people these days called watching ads for other games. He was just getting into the flow when a Gigs notification came up with an address in a gated community near San Pedro.

“Be here at 2, don’t forget your swimsuit lol.”